

Water Lines

SDW Hotline Report

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Top Ten Topics

Topic	Questions (phone & e-mail)	Percent of Total* Questions
Tap Water Testing	263**	12
Local Drinking Water Quality	165	7
Household Wells	124	6
Consumer Confidence Reports	114	5
Lead	107	5
Non-EPA Environmental	105	5
Home Water Treatment Units	98	4
Other EPA	96	4
Other Background	77	3
Other Drinking Water Security	65	3

*A total of 2,224 questions were answered by the Hotline (via telephone and e-mail) in March 2003.

**Citizens who obtain their drinking water from private household wells asked 38 percent of the tap water testing questions.

Calls	E-mails	Total
1,695	307	2,002***

***A single call or e-mail may generate multiple questions.

Published Monthly

See past reports at

<http://intranet.epa.gov/ow/hotline>

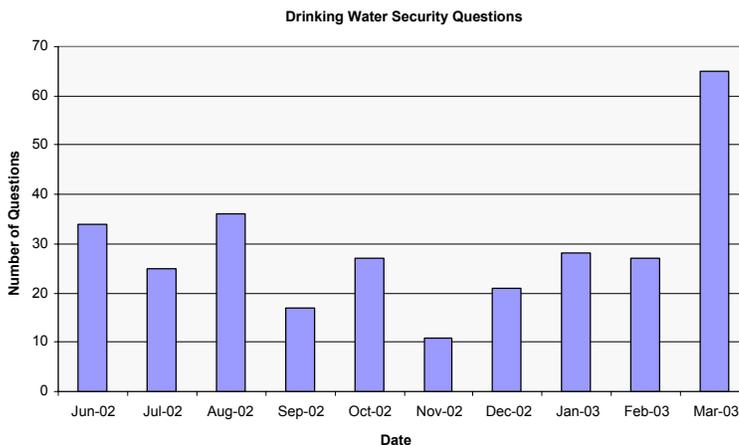
Safe Drinking Water Hotline: National Toll-free No.: (800) 426-4791 or (877) EPAWATER

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Monthly Trends

During March, the Safe Drinking Water Hotline noted an increase in the number of drinking water security questions. This increase may be attributed to the March 31, 2003 deadline for community water systems (CWSs) serving over 100,000 persons to submit a completed vulnerability assessment to EPA, pursuant to the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002. Hotline customers requested information about vulnerability assessment requirements, the availability of guidance such as the *Baseline Threat* document, and the appropriate mail or courier service for completed assessment delivery. The Hotline expects to see similar trends in drinking water security questions as smaller systems complete their vulnerability assessments and as additional certification and submittal deadlines approach. The graph below displays the number of drinking water security questions, not related to the drinking water security grant program, received each month since June 2002.



What's New

New Publications:

- *Consumer Confidence Report Rule: A Quick Reference Guide*, EPA816-F-02-026, is now available at www.epa.gov/safewater/ccr1.html.

Did You Know?

There are an estimated 3.3 million lead pipe connections for drinking water in the United States.

(Opflow 29, No. 1 (2003): pp. 12-14)

March 2003

Calendar:

Who?	What?	Where?	When?	More Information
NSTA	National Science Teachers Convention	Philadelphia, PA	3/23/2003 – 3/26/2003	
NDWAC	Contaminant Candidate List Classification Process Work Group	Washington, DC	3/27/2003 – 3/28/2003	
NRWA	Rural Water Rally	Washington, DC	4/6/2003 – 4/8/2003	
OW, OSWER, EPA Region 4	2003 EPA Science Forum	Washington, DC	5/5/2003 – 5/7/2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For more information: www.epa.gov/ord/scienceforum
State/EPA	State Revolving Fund Work Group Meeting	Washington, DC	5/6/2003 – 5/7/2003	
Council of Infrastructure Financing Authorities	Federal Policy Conference	Washington, DC	5/8/2003 – 5/9/2003	
National Association of State Floodplain Managers	Annual Conference	St. Louis, MO	5/11/2003 – 5/16/2003	
NDWAC	Contaminant Candidate List Classification Process Work Group	Washington, DC	5/12/2003 – 5/13/2003	
NDWAC	Full Council Meeting	Washington, DC	5/14/2003 – 5/15/2003	
EPA	Source Water Protection Conference	Washington, DC	6/2/2003 – 6/4/2003	For more information: www.epa.gov/safewater/protect/swpconf.html
	National UIC Managers Meeting	Denver, CO	6/10/2003 – 6/12/2003	
AWWA	Annual Conference	Anaheim, CA	6/15/2003 – 6/19/2003	For more information: http://www.awwa.org
NDWAC	Contaminant Candidate List Classification Process Work Group	Washington, DC	7/16/2003 – 7/17/2003	
EPA	Community Involvement Conference	Philadelphia, PA	7/22/2003 – 7/25/2003	
ASIWPCA	Annual Conference	Whitefish, MT	8/24/2003 – 8/26/2003	

Frequently Asked Qs & As

This section provides answers to frequently asked questions not necessarily represented in one of the Top Ten Topic categories.

Q: Are the current drinking water standards protective of my children's health? Is there a list of drinking water contaminants that may be particularly harmful to children?

A: The National Primary Drinking Water Standards are designed to protect children and adults. The standards take into account the potential health effects contaminants can have on populations that are most at risk. Before developing a standard, EPA conducts a risk assessment in which scientists evaluate whether fetuses, infants, children, or other groups are more vulnerable to a contaminant than the general population. The standards are set to protect the most vulnerable group. Additionally, EPA continues to conduct research to determine if revisions to existing standards are necessary. Further information about drinking water standards for children and a list of drinking water contaminants that may be particularly harmful to children is available in EPA's *Children and Drinking Water Standards* (EPA815-K-9-001, December 1999) on the Internet at www.epa.gov/safewater/kids/child.pdf.

Q: I read that the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations apply to public water systems in all states. Does this include the District of Columbia?

A: Yes. The National Primary Drinking Water Regulations apply to public water systems in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (SDWA 1401(13)(A), 1411).

Q: I am concerned that the salt used for highway deicing is contaminating my well water supply. Can these chemicals affect the quality of my drinking water?

A: Sodium chloride is the most commonly used deicer that can affect drinking water quality. Sodium can lead to cardiovascular, kidney, and liver diseases, and has a direct link to high blood pressure. Although, there is no maximum contaminant level (MCL) or health advisory level for sodium, there is a Drinking Water Equivalent Level

(DWEL) of 20 mg/L. This value was developed for those individuals restricted to a total sodium intake of 500 mg/day and should not be extrapolated to the entire population. Chloride, for which EPA has established a national secondary drinking water standard of 250 mg/L, adds a salty taste to water and corrodes pipes. Secondary standards are established only as guidelines to assist public water systems in managing their drinking water for aesthetic considerations such as taste, color, and odor (*Source Water Protection Practices Bulletin: Managing Highway Deicing to Prevent Contamination of Drinking Water*, EPA816-F-02-019, August 2002).

Q: A community water system (CWS) has performed voluntary monitoring that indicates the presence of non-regulated contaminants. Should this monitoring information be included in the annual Consumer Confidence Report (CCR)? If so, how should this information be presented?

A: EPA strongly encourages CWSs to report any monitoring results that may indicate a health concern, such as detection of a contaminant above a proposed MCL or health advisory level. EPA recommends that the CCR include the results of the monitoring and an explanation of the significance of the results, noting the existence of a health advisory or a proposed regulation. If additional information for non-regulated contaminants is included, it must be displayed outside of the detected contaminants table(s) (*Revised State Implementation Guidance for the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) Rule*, EPA816-R-01-002, January 2001).

Q: Public water systems (PWSs) are required to report the highest contaminant level used to determine compliance with a National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) and also the range of the detected levels in their annual Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) (141.153(d)(4)(iv)). How should a PWS report the sampling data on a CCR for a contaminant when compliance for that contaminant is determined on a running annual average basis?

A: When the PWS determines compliance with the NPDWR by calculating a running annual average of all samples taken at a sampling point, the PWS must include the highest average of the sampling point (as reported to the state for compliance purposes) and the range of levels detected. If compliance is determined by a running annual average of all samples at all sampling points, the PWS must include the highest average of the contaminant

levels detected and the range of detected levels (40 CFR 141.153(d)(4)(iv)(B) and (C)).

Q: Primacy allows Indian Tribes the opportunity to assume principal responsibility in the enforcement of public drinking water and/or Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program regulations within the Indian Tribes' jurisdiction. Before EPA will assign primacy to a Tribe, it must apply for "treatment as a state" status (SDWA 1451). How is this term defined?

A: "Treatment as a state" means the federal government, through EPA, agrees that the Tribe has the same right as any state to apply for program supervision and enforcement authority under the Public Water System Supervision Program and UIC Program. To gain this status Indian Tribes must present evidence in an application that it is a federally recognized Tribe; it promotes and protects the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens; it has jurisdiction over the area where the program functions are to be exercised; and it is capable of carrying out the programs for which it seeking authority to administer on behalf of the federal government (*Indian Primacy Procedures Handbook for the Public Water System Supervision (PWSS) Program and the Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program*, EPA812-B-93-004, March 1993, 40 CFR 142.72).

Hotline Statistics

Monthly Summary of Hotline Service

Total number of calls answered	1,695
Total number of e-mails received	307
Average wait time (in seconds)	0:37
Percent of calls satisfied immediately	99.9%
Percent of all calls answered in < 1 min	81.8%
Percent of callbacks answered in 5 days	100%
Percent of e-mails answered in 5 days	100%
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about local DW quality	1,053
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about arsenic rule	59

Comparison to Previous Year

	Calls	E-mails
March 2003	1,695	307
March 2002	1,783	348

Top Ten Referrals

Inquiry Referred to:	Number of Referrals	Percent of Total* Referrals
1. State Lab Certification	234	16
2. EPA Internet	230	16
3. Local Water System	156	11
4. State PWSS	134	9
5. NSF/WQA/UL	111	8
6. Local Public Health	73	5
7. AGWT/WSC	72	5
8. EPA Regions	69	5
9. Non-EPA Internet	47	3
10. Other Hotlines	47	3

**A total of 1,442 referrals to other resources, agencies, and organizations were provided by the Hotline in March 2003.*

Customer Profiles

Customer	Calls	E-mails
Analytical Laboratories	13	2
Citizen - Private Well	268	37
Citizen - PWS	834	121
Consultants/Industry/Trade (DW)	95	16
Consultants/Industry/Trade (Other)	122	19
Environmental Groups	3	1
EPA	23	4
Other Federal Agency	15	8
Government, Local	19	7
Government, State	35	8
Government, Tribal	0	0
Spanish Speaking	1	0
International	11	26
Media	4	0
Medical Professional	8	3
Public Water System	167	13
Schools/University	58	42
Other	19	0
TOTALS	1,695	307

Daily Call Data

	Total Calls Answered	Average Wait Time mm:sec
3-March	94	00:47
4-March	70	00:36
5-March	77	00:30
6-March	93	00:57
7-March	70	00:47
10-March	87	00:32
11-March	93	01:03
12-March	99	00:34
13-March	79	00:32
14-March	54	00:19
17-March	92	00:31
18-March	90	01:16
19-March	72	00:27
20-March	77	00:46
21-March	56	01:45
24-March	87	00:15
25-March	88	00:15
26-March	72	00:15
27-March	86	00:19
28-March	66	00:24
29-March	93	00:19
TOTALS	1,695	00:37

Topic Categories

Category	Calls	E-mails
Microbials/Disinfection Byproducts		
Chlorine	14	2
Coliforms	25	5
Cryptosporidium	28	2
Disinfection/Disinfection Byproducts (Other)	22	2
Disinfection – Home Water	12	2
Other Microbials	5	2
Storage – Home Water	19	3
Surface Water Treatment (SWTR, ESWTR, LT1FBR)	49	6
Trihalomethane (THM)	16	7
Inorganic Chemicals (IOC)/Synthetic Organic Chemicals (SOC)		
Arsenic	26	7
Fluoride	11	7
Methyl- <i>tertiary</i> -butyl-ether (MTBE)	10	3
Perchlorate	8	2
Phase I, II & V	22	4
Sodium Monitoring	3	1
Sulfate	1	0
Lead and Copper		
Copper	11	0
Lead	103	4
Lead Contamination Control Act (LCCA)/Lead Ban	14	0
Radionuclides		
Radionuclides (Other)	20	4
Radionuclides (Radon)	56	2
Secondary DW Regulations		
Secondary DW Regulations	27	9
SDWA Background/Overview		
Definitions & Applicability	11	5
MCL List	54	8
Other Background	45	32
SDWA	13	2

Category	Calls	E-mails
Water on Tap	11	2
Other DW Regulations		
Analytical Methods (DW)	14	15
Contaminant Candidate List/ Drinking Water Priority List	6	0
Consumer Confidence Report (DW)	109	5
DW Primacy (PWS)	2	0
Operator (PWS) Certification	3	1
Other Drinking Water Security	53	12
Public Notification (PWS)	62	3
Security Planning Grants	8	3
State Revolving Fund (DW)	4	1
Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR)	41	3
Other Drinking Water		
Additives Program	4	7
Bottled Water	33	9
Complaints about PWS	37	11
Compliance & Enforcement (PWS)	18	4
Home Water Treatment Units	84	14
Infrastructure/Cap. Development	11	4
Local DW Quality	145	20
Tap Water Testing	246	17
Treatment/BATs (DW)	9	10
Drinking Water Source Protection		
Ground Water Rule	7	1
Sole Source Aquifer	2	1
Source Water/Wellhead Protect.	21	4
UIC Program	16	1
Out of Purview		
Household Wells	106	18
Non-Environmental	46	13
Non-EPA Environmental	73	32
Other EPA (Programs)	74	22
TOTALS	1,870	354

EPA DISCLAIMER

Answers to questions in the Safe Drinking Water Hotline monthly report are intended to be purely informational and are based on SDWA provisions, EPA regulations, guidance, and established policy effective at the time of publication. The answers given reflect EPA staff's best judgment at the time and do not represent a final or official EPA interpretation. This report does not substitute for the applicable provisions of statutes and regulations, guidance, etc., nor is it a regulation itself. Thus, it does not impose legally-binding requirements on EPA, States, or the regulated community. An answer to a question in this report may be revised at any time to reflect EPA's revisions to existing regulations, changes in EPA's approach to interpreting its regulations or statutory authority, or for other reasons. EPA may provide a different answer to a question in this report in the future.

Also, an answer provided in this report may not apply to a particular situation based upon the circumstances. Any decisions regarding a particular case will be made based on the applicable statutes and regulations. Therefore, interested parties are free to raise questions and objections about the appropriateness of the application of an answer in this report to a particular situation, and EPA will consider whether or not the recommendations or interpretations in the answer are accurate and appropriate in that situation. The information in this report is not intended, nor can it be relied upon, to create any rights enforceable by any party in litigation with the United States.

SAFE DRINKING WATER HOTLINE MONTHLY REPORT

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APPENDIX A: FEDERAL REGISTER SUMMARIES

FINAL RULES

“Minor Clarification of National Primary Drinking Water Regulation for Arsenic” March 25, 2003 (68 FR 14501)

EPA announced that it is revising the rule text in the January 2001 final rule that established the 10 parts per billion arsenic drinking water standard to express the standard as 0.010 mg/L, in order to clarify the implementation of the original rule. This regulation is effective April 24, 2003.

NOTICES

“Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission of EPA ICR No. 0234.08 to OMB for Review and Approval; Comment Request” March 11, 2003 (68 FR 11544)

This document announced that EPA forwarded the Information Collection Request (ICR) entitled, “Performance Evaluation Studies of Water and Wastewater Laboratories,” EPA ICR No. 0234.08, to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval. Comments for the ICR, OMB No. 2080-0021, must be submitted on or before April 10, 2003.

“Public Water System Supervision Program Revision for the State of Mississippi” March 11, 2003 (68 FR 11550)

EPA announced that the State of Mississippi is revising its approved Public Water System Supervision Program. Mississippi has adopted drinking water regulations for the Interim Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule, the Disinfectant/Disinfection Byproducts Rule, and the Public Notification Rule. EPA has determined that these revisions are no less stringent than the corresponding federal regulations. Therefore, EPA intends on approving this State program revision.

“Agency Information Collection Activities; OMB Responses” March 12, 2003 (68 FR 11833)

This document announced OMB responses to Agency clearance requests, in compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.). Specifically, EPA ICR No. 0234.07, “Performance Evaluation Studies on Water and Wastewater Laboratories,” was granted a short-term extension on January 29, 2003. The new expiration date for this ICR, OMB No. 2080-0021, is February 28, 2003.

**“Meetings of the Drinking Water Contaminant Candidate List Classification Process Work Group of The National Drinking Water Advisory Council”
March 12, 2003 (68 FR 11836)**

EPA announced the forthcoming meetings of the Drinking Water Contaminant Candidate List (CCL) Classification Process Work Group of the National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC). The dates for the NDWAC CCL Work Group meetings for the remaining year of 2003 will be as follows: March 27-28, 2003; May 12-13, 2003; July 16-17, 2003; September 17-18, 2003; and November 13-14, 2003.

**“Agency Information Collection Activities: Title IV of the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002: Drinking Water Security and Safety (Act); Comment Request”
March 14, 2003 (68 FR 12346)**

This document announced that EPA forwarded the ICR entitled, “Information Collection Request for Title IV of the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002: Drinking Water Security and Safety (Act),” EPA ICR No. 2103.01, to OMB for review and approval. In this notice EPA invites comments on the proposed ICR, including EPA’s intention to seek an emergency clearance from OMB to begin collecting data from community water systems that are required to comply with the Act. Comments must be received by March 24, 2003.